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## White House cybersecurity strategy stresses software safety

By ERIC TUCKER and  
FRANK BAJAK

Associated Press

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — An ambitious and wide-ranging White House cybersecurity plan released Thursday calls for bolstering protections on critical sectors and making software companies legally liable when their products don't meet basic standards. The strategy document promises to use "all instruments of national power" to pre-empt cyberattacks.

The Democratic administration also said it would work to "impose robust and clear limits" on private sector data collection, including of geolocation and health information.

"We still have a long way to go before every American feels confident that cyberspace is safe for them," acting national cyber director Kemba Walden said during an online forum on Thursday. "We expect school districts to go toe-to-toe with transnational criminal organizations largely by themselves. This isn't just unfair. It's ineffective."

The strategy largely codifies work already underway during the last two years following a spate of high-profile ransomware attacks on critical infrastructure. A 2021 attack on a major fuel pipeline caused panic at the pump, resulting in an



President Joe Biden speaks during a meeting about cybersecurity, in the East Room of the White House, Aug. 25, 2021, in Washington. Associated Press

East Coast fuel shortage, and other damaging attacks made cybersecurity a national priority. Russia's invasion of Ukraine compounded those concerns. The 35-page document lays the groundwork for better countering rising threats to government agencies, private industry, schools, hospitals and other vital infrastructure that are

routinely breached. In the past few weeks, the FBI, U.S. Marshals Service and Dish Network were among the intrusion victims.

"The defense is hardly winning. Every few weeks someone gets hacked terribly," said Edward Amoroso, CEO of the cybersecurity firm TAG Cyber.

He called the White House strategy largely aspiration-

al. Its boldest initiatives — including stricter rules on breach reporting and software liability — are apt to meet resistance from business and Republicans in Congress.

Brandon Valeriano, former senior adviser to the federal government's Cyberspace Solarium Commission, agreed.

"There's a lot to like here.

It just lacks a lot of specifics," said Valeriano, a distinguished senior fellow at the Marine Corp. University. "They produce a document that speaks very much to regulation at a time when the United States is very much against regulation."

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# White House cybersecurity strategy stresses software safety

**Continued from Front**

The strategy's data-collection component is also expected to meet stiff headwinds in Congress, though opinion polls say most Americans favor federal data privacy legislation.

In a new report, the tech data firm Forrester Research said state-sponsored cyberattacks rose nearly 100% between 2019 and 2022 and their nature changed, with a greater percentage now carried out for data destruction and financial theft. The threats are mostly from abroad: Russia-based cybercrooks and state-backed hackers from Russia, China, North Korea and Iran.

President Joe Biden's administration has already imposed cybersecurity regulations on certain critical industry sectors, such as electric utilities, gas pipelines and nuclear facilities. The strategy calls for expanding them to other vital sectors.

In a statement accompanying the document, Biden says his administration is taking on the "systemic challenge that too much of the responsibility for cybersecurity has fallen on individual users and small organizations." That will mean shifting legal liability onto software makers, holding companies rather than end users accountable.

As a nation, "we tend to devolve responsibility for cybersecurity downward. We ask individuals, small businesses and local governments to shoulder a sig-



Dish Network satellite dishes are shown at an apartment complex in Palo Alto, Calif., Feb. 23, 2011. The TV provider Dish Network continued to recover Wednesday, March 1, 2023, from a ransomware attack last week that it said disrupted operations, internet sites and call centers. It said unspecified data was stolen and it was investigating whether that included the personal information of customers.

**Associated Press**

nificant burden for defending us all," Walden said.

The White House wants to put greater responsibility on the software companies.

"Too many vendors ignore best practices for secure development, ship products with insecure default configurations or known vulnerabilities, and integrate third-party software of unvetted or unknown provenance," the document says. That must change, it adds, stating that the White House will work with Congress and the private sector on legislation

to establish liability.

The director of the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, Jen Easterly, drew an analogy in a speech Monday at Carnegie Mellon University to the automotive industry before consumer advocates led by Ralph Nader forced safety reforms, including seat belts and air bags: "The burden of safety should never fall solely upon the customer. Technology manufacturers must take ownership of the security outcomes for their customers." But Amoroso, the

cybersecurity executive, called that comparison misguided because software is a different animal, inherently complex with hackers constantly finding ways to break it. The liability initiative is apt to get tied up in the courts as industry resists, he said. "If you are a cybersecurity lawyer this is manna from heaven."

Asked if it was fair to make software companies liable in court for cyberattack damage, the trade association BSA — The Software Alliance said in a statement: "Cybersecurity is constantly

evolving and providing incentives for companies to use best practices in secure software design and development would benefit the entire ecosystem."

The group, whose members include Microsoft, Adobe, SAP, Oracle and Zoom, added: "We look forward to working with the administration and Congress on any proposed legislation to promote best practices." Amoroso said he liked positive aspects of the strategy such as securing clean-energy technologies and bolstering the cybersecurity work force, currently short 700,000 workers nationally. The document also calls for more aggressive efforts to pre-empt cyberattacks by drawing on military, law enforcement and diplomatic tools as well as help from the private sector. Such offensive operations, it says, must take place with "greater speed, scale, and frequency."

Disruption of hostile cyberactivity through "defending forward" is already happening. The FBI and U.S. Cyber Command now routinely engage cybercriminals and state-backed hackers in cyberspace, working with foreign partners to thwart ransomware operations and election interference in 2018 and 2020. The government has already deemed ransomware a national security threat and the document says it will continue to use methods such as "hacking the hackers" to combat it. □

## Pence won't say whether he'd support Trump as 2024 nominee



Former Vice President Mike Pence speaks during a roundtable discussion on police reform on Thursday, March 2, 2023, in North Charleston, S.C.

**Associated Press**

**By MEG KINNARD**  
**Associated Press**

**NORTH CHARLESTON, S.C. (AP)** — Former Vice President Mike Pence declined to say Thursday whether he would back Donald Trump if his former boss were to be the Republican presidential nominee in 2024.

Pence, widely expected to seek the nomination himself, suggested that Trump's leadership style isn't what the party needs in the upcoming White House race. "I think we'll have better

choices," Pence told The Associated Press in an interview in South Carolina. "I'm persuaded that no one could have defeated Hillary Clinton in 2016 except Donald Trump, but I think we live in a different time and it calls for different leadership."

Pence and Trump have been estranged since the violent storming of the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, by Trump's supporters in an attempt to stop the congressional certification of Dem-

ocrat Joe Biden's victory. Republicans are expected to include a pledge to support the eventual GOP nominee among formal criteria for participation in primary debates.

Pence, on his ninth trip to the early-voting state since leaving office, participated in a policing roundtable with officials in North Charleston. He planned to meet later with pastors in Greenville and host a talk about his latest book at Bob Jones University. □

# Trump can be sued for Jan. 6 riot harm, Justice Dept. says

By ERIC TUCKER and ALAN-NA DURKIN RICHER

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — Former President Donald Trump can be sued by injured Capitol Police officers and Democratic lawmakers over the Jan. 6, 2021, insurrection at the U.S. Capitol, the Justice Department said Thursday in a federal court case testing Trump's legal vulnerability for his speech before the riot.

In court papers, the Justice Department urged a federal appeals court in Washington to allow the lawsuits to move forward, writing that "no part of a President's official responsibilities includes the incitement of imminent private violence."

The Justice Department said it took no position on the lawsuits' claims that the former president's words incited the attack on the Capitol. Nevertheless, Justice Department lawyers said the court should reject Trump's argument that "absolutely immunity" shields him from being sued because the remarks were in line with his official duties.

"As the Nation's leader and head of state, the Presi-



In this Jan. 6, 2021, file photo, President Donald Trump speaks during a rally protesting the electoral college certification of Joe Biden as President in Washington.

Associated Press

dent has 'an extraordinary power to speak to his fellow citizens and on their behalf,' they wrote. "But that traditional function is one of public communication and persuasion, not incitement of imminent private violence."

The brief was filed by lawyers of the Justice Department's Civil Division and has

no bearing on a separate criminal investigation by a department special counsel into whether Trump can be criminally charged over efforts to undo President Joe Biden's victory in the 2020 presidential election ahead of the Capitol riot. In fact, the lawyers note that they are not taking a position with respect to po-

tential criminal liability for Trump or anyone else.

An email seeking comment was sent to an attorney for Trump on Thursday. Trump's lawyers have argued he was acting within his official rights and had no intention to spark violence when he called on thousands of supporters to "march to the Capitol" and "fight like hell"

before the riot erupted.

The case is among many legal woes facing Trump as he mounts another bid for the White House in 2024.

A prosecutor in Georgia has been investigating whether Trump and his allies broke the law as they tried to overturn his election defeat in that state. Trump is also under federal criminal investigation over top secret documents found at his Florida estate.

In the separate investigation into Trump and his allies' efforts to keep the Republican president in power, special counsel Jack Smith has subpoenaed former Vice President Mike Pence, who has said he will fight the subpoena.

Trump is appealing a decision by a federal judge in Washington, who last year rejected efforts by the former president to toss out the conspiracy civil lawsuits filed by the lawmakers and police officers. U.S. District Judge Amit Mehta ruled that Trump's words during a rally before the violent storming of the U.S. Capitol were likely "words of incitement not protected by the First Amendment." □

## Number of imprisoned veterans concerns former defense chiefs

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — Two former Iraq and Afghanistan War-era defense secretaries are recommending that the government consider new ways to ensure that military service is taken into account when courts prosecute former service members.

The Veterans Justice Commission, led by onetime Pentagon chiefs Chuck Hagel and Leon Panetta, offered that guidance after reports that a concerning number of veterans have been convicted of crimes since leaving military service.

The commission was tasked with examining the extent to which veterans are getting in trouble with the law, whether they are receiving appropriate transitional assistance when they no longer are in the armed services and how they are

treated once they enter the criminal justice system. Both Hagel and Panetta led the Defense Department during the Iraq War, which marks its 20th anniversary this month, and the Afghanistan War, which ended abruptly in 2021 when U.S. forces withdrew from Kabul.

Hagel, a Vietnam veteran, said many of the stressors his generation faced are similar to those for this new generation of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans, except that the United States had never been in a 20-year long conflict and there were unprecedented demands that the multiple, prolonged deployments put on the relatively small pool of people who serve. While most veterans transition into civilian life without incident, the commission found that as many as 1

in 3 of the nation's 19 million military veterans have reported being arrested at least once in their lifetime, and that about 181,500 veterans are incarcerated and make up about 8 percent of the state prison population and 5 percent of the federal prison population.

For comparison, less than 1 percent of all U.S. adults volunteer to serve, according to the Pew Research Center.

Those risks for veterans are elevated by post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury and substance abuse issues, the report said. "Once ensnared by the system, veterans often present a complex set of needs and risk factors that are distinctive from those characteristic of civilians without a military background. But multiple



Former Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel appears to introduce nominee to be Secretary of the Army Christine Elizabeth Wormuth at a Senate Armed Services Committee nomination hearing in Washington, May 13, 2021.

Associated Press

barriers prevent many veterans from receiving the targeted interventions they need," the report found. Instead of prison sentences, the commission has recommended that state and federal statutes

should "create or expand judicial diversion," which would establish alternative treatments that could potentially allow for reduced charges, to avoid conviction or have a sentence lowered. □

# Half of California freed from drought thanks to rain, snow

By JOHN ANTCHAK  
Associated Press

**LOS ANGELES (AP)** — Tremendous rains and snowfall since late last year have freed half of California from drought, but low groundwater levels remain a persistent problem, U.S. Drought Monitor data showed Thursday.

The latest survey found that moderate or severe drought covers about 49% of the state, nearly 17% of the state is free of drought or a condition described as abnormally dry. The remainder is still abnormally dry.

"Clearly the amount of water that's fallen this year has greatly alleviated the drought," said Daniel Swain, a climate scientist at the University of California, Los Angeles. "It has not ended the drought completely but we're in a very different place than we were a year ago."

California's latest drought began in 2020 and no relief appeared in sight heading into this winter.

Three months ago virtually all of California was in drought, including at extreme and exceptional levels. Water agencies serving



State Route 138 winds through snow-covered trees near Hesperia, Calif., Wednesday, March 1, 2023.

Associated Press

millions of people, agriculture and industry were told to expect only a fraction of requested allocations.

The turnabout began with a series of atmospheric rivers that pounded the state from late December through mid-January, building a huge Sierra Nevada snowpack, causing flooding, toppling trees and smashing the coast with extreme surf.

Water authorities began boosting allocations and, after a few largely dry weeks, powerful storms with arctic air returned in February, creating epic vistas of white-capped mountains while shutting down highways and ski resorts and burying communities in enough snow to collapse roofs.

The monitor shows three regions have received the

most benefit from copious precipitation, including snowfall measured in feet rather than inches.

The central Sierra and foothills are now free of drought or abnormal dryness for the first time since January 2020, the monitor said. The central coast from Monterey Bay to Los Angeles County is also now drought-free, along with two counties on the far north coast.

"The rain has improved California soil moisture and streamflow levels, while the snow has increased mountain snowpack to much above-normal levels," the monitor said. "Most California reservoirs have re-filled with water levels near or above average, but groundwater levels remain low and may take months to recover."

As of Thursday, the water content of the Sierra snowpack, which provides about a third of California's water, was 170% of the historical average on April 1, when it is normally at its peak, according to the state Department of Water Resources.

Department officials plan to conduct a Sierra snow measurement on Friday and hold a briefing on how the remaining month of California's traditional snow season will impact the state's water supplies.

Swain said the snowpack could become the largest ever observed in parts of California. The outlook calls for a continuing wet pattern, particularly for northern parts of the state, and more feet of snow, he said. □

# No bail for Pennsylvania man with explosives in suitcase



This driver's license photo released in an FBI affidavit shows alleged suspect Marc Muffley, who was arrested Monday, Feb. 27, 2023, after an explosive was found in a bag checked onto a Florida-bound flight at Lehigh Valley International Airport in Allentown, Pa., federal authorities said.

Associated Press

By MARYCLAIRE DALE  
**PHILADELPHIA (AP)** — A Pennsylvania man admit-

ted packing explosive materials, fuses and a lighter in a suitcase he checked for a commercial flight to Florida and fled the Lehigh Valley airport when he feared arrest, federal authorities said in a court document filed Thursday.

Marc Muffley, 40, of Lansford, called his girlfriend for a ride when he heard his name being paged at the airport, and soon switched his phone number to avoid being tracked, prosecutors said.

"The danger he created ... is simply astonishing," Assistant United States Attorney Sherri A. Stephan said at a Thursday court hearing, when she asked a judge to deny bail. "The fact TSA (the Transportation Security Administration) was able to immediately locate this device and prevent it from

being placed on an airplane is to their credit."

A defense lawyer suggested that Muffley only wanted to set off fireworks on a Florida beach, where he said the one-time construction worker sometimes cares for an ailing grandfather.

However, U.S. Magistrate Pamela A. Carlos agreed to detain him without bail, finding that Muffley was both a flight risk and a danger to the community.

Authorities said the fact the explosive powder was packed in the same checked bag with the other items increased the risk of an explosion.

"The baggage also contained a can of butane, a lighter, a pipe with white powder residue suspected to be methamphetamine, a wireless drill with cordless

batteries, and two GFCI outlets taped together with black tape," prosecutors wrote in a detention memorandum filed Thursday.

"His actions seriously jeopardized the lives of airport workers and patrons, and if the explosive had not been intercepted, the flight's passengers and the aircraft," the memo said.

Muffley is charged with possessing an explosive in an airport and possessing or attempting to place an explosive or incendiary device on an aircraft, according to a criminal complaint. The defense lawyer, Jonathan McDonald, argued that the items were not "incendiary" and therefore did not meet the requirements of the second charge. Muffley attended the hearing, which was held via videoconference, from jail but

did not speak.

"No one has posited one conceivable theory on how this thing could have gone off. That was not going to happen inside of a bag," McDonald said.

However, Carlos found probable cause to uphold both charges.

Muffley was arrested at his home Monday night, hours after he had checked in for the Allegiant Air flight at the Lehigh Valley International Airport. The flight was bound for Orlando.

His record includes misdemeanor arrests for drug possession, theft and driving under the influence, which led to a few jail stints, the memo said. His girlfriend told authorities he feared being arrested at the airport on an outstanding child support warrant, authorities said. □

# British navy seizes Iran missiles, parts likely Yemen bound

By JON GAMBRELL

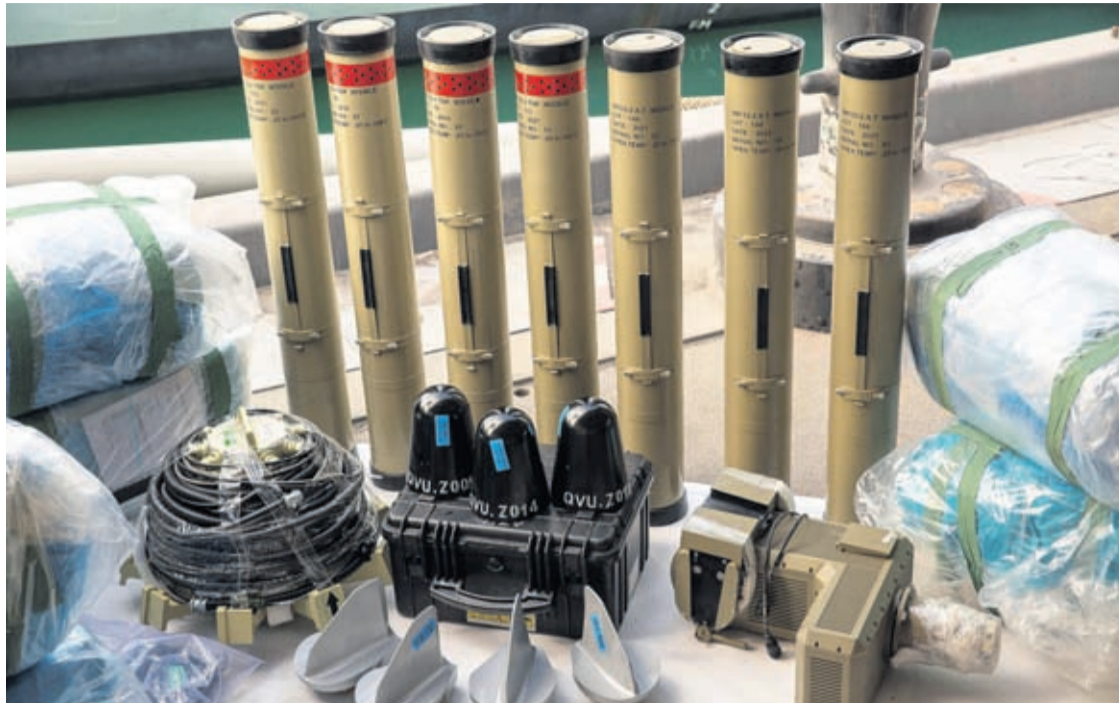
Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) —

The British navy seized anti-tank missiles and fins for ballistic missile assemblies during a raid on a small boat heading from Iran likely to Yemen, authorities said Thursday, the latest such seizure in the Gulf of Oman.

The seizure by the Royal Navy comes after other seizures by French and U.S. forces in the region as Western powers increase their pressure on Iran, which is it now enriching uranium closer than ever to weapons-grade levels. It also comes as regional and international powers try to find an end to the yearslong war gripping Yemen, the Arab world's poorest country, and as Iran arms Russia in its war on Ukraine.

The raid took place Feb. 23 after an American aircraft detected a small motorboat with cargo covered by a gray tarp heading from Iran, with a helicopter from the Royal Navy frigate HMS Lancaster chasing the vessel as it ignored being hailed by radio, the British Defense Ministry said. The



In this photo from the U.S. Army, anti-tank missiles and medium-range ballistic missile components seized by the United Kingdom Royal Navy sit pier side at an undisclosed location in the Middle East on Feb. 26, 2023.

Associated Press

boat tried to reenter Iranian territorial water, but was stopped before it could.

Inside the boat, British troops found Russian-designed 9M133 Kornet anti-tank guided missiles, weapons also manufactured in Iran under the name "Dehlavieh," the U.S. Navy's Mideast-based 5th Fleet and the British navy said. Those weapons have been

seen in other seizures suspected to be from Iran and bound for Yemen.

Sailors found small fins that the U.S. Navy identified as jet vanes for medium-range ballistic missiles, as well as devices the Navy identified as "impact sensor covers" that go on the tips of those missiles.

While the British did not specifically identify where

it suspected the weapons would go, the U.S. Navy described the seizure as happening "along a route historically used to traffic weapons unlawfully to Yemen."

Iranian components have helped build a missile arsenal for Yemen's Houthi rebels, who have held the country's capital, Sanaa, since 2014.

A United Nations resolution bans arms transfers to Yemen's Iranian-backed Houthi rebels. Tehran long has denied arming the rebels, despite physical evidence, numerous seizures and experts tying the weapons back to Iran.

In its statement, the Royal Navy referred to that U.N. resolution and said the world body "has been informed about the seizure and invited to conduct its own inspection of the materiel."

"This seizure by HMS Lancaster and the permanent presence of the Royal Navy in the Gulf region supports our commitment to uphold international law and tackle activity that threatens peace and security around the world," British Defense Secretary Ben Wallace said.

Vice Adm. Brad Cooper, the commander of the American 5th Fleet, said in a statement that this was the "seventh illegal weapon or drug interdiction in the last three months and yet another example of Iran's increasing malign maritime activity across the region." □

# Israeli campaign raises funds for torched Palestinian town

By ISAAC SCHARF and AMI BENTOV

Associated Press

YOKNEAM, Israel (AP) —

An Israeli-led crowdfunding campaign has raised hundreds of thousands of dollars for Palestinian residents of a West Bank town that was set ablaze by radical Jewish settlers, the organizer of the drive said Thursday.

Some 12,000 Israelis donated nearly 1.7 million shekels (465,000 dollars) since the campaign was launched this week. The fundraising effort was a rare instance of cooperation between Israelis and Palestinians at a time when tensions have been surging between the sides over spiraling violence.

Scores of Israeli settlers went on a violent rampage in the northern West Bank town of Hawara late on

Sunday, setting dozens of cars and homes on fire after two settlers were killed by a Palestinian gunman there earlier in the day. One Palestinian was killed by Israeli fire during the incident, the Palestinian Health Ministry said.

The rampage, the worst such violence in decades, prompted Israeli activist Yaya Fink, an observant Jew, to launch the fundraising initiative.

"I had very bad feelings for when I saw hundreds of religious Jews tried to burn Hawara, including innocent people," he said, adding that it delivered a message that "the majority of the Jews are against extremism, against racism." He said most of the money was raised within the campaign's first 12 hours.

Fink said the money will be sent as compensation to

Palestinians whose property was damaged in the attack. He said he received threats from opponents to the campaign, who called him a traitor for raising money for the Palestinians, even as some are carrying out attacks.

The rampage prompted international condemnation. But Israel's government, which is made up of pro-settlement ultranationalists, expressed little outrage and only called on the perpetrators not to take the law into their own hands.

However, some lawmakers went even further, including Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich, who said Hawara should be "erased" — but by state authorities and not by private citizens. He later backtracked on those remarks.

U.S. State Department spokesman Ned Price on



Palestinians clean their shops before Palestinian Prime Minister Mohammad Shtayyeh visits to survey the aftermath of a rampage by settlers in Hawara, near the West Bank city of Nablus, Wednesday, March 1, 2023.

Associated Press

Wednesday called on Netanyahu to "publicly and clearly reject" Smotrich's comments, describing them as "repugnant" and "disgusting."

On Thursday, U.N. spokesman Stephane Dujarric called Smotrich's remark

about Hawara "irresponsible" and "unacceptable." The U.N. chief, Antonio Guterres, has reiterated his call for all sides to "refrain from incitement, inflammatory rhetoric and all acts of provocation," Dujarric added. □

# Italy, France confront 2nd year of western Europe drought

By **FRANCES D'EMILIO**

**Associated Press**

**ROME (AP)** — Bracing for Italy's second consecutive year of drought for the first time in decades, Premier Giorgia Meloni huddled with ministers Wednesday to start mapping out an action plan, joining France and other nations in western Europe grappling with scant winter rain and snow. Meloni and her ministers decided to appoint an "extraordinary commissioner with executive powers" to carry out the government's drought battle plan once it's devised. Italy appointed someone to a similar position to implement strategies against the COVID-19 pandemic.

Experts say the last time the nation experienced two back-to-back years of drought was 1989-90 but that conditions are more severe now.

With scant winter snowfall translating into vastly insufficient snowmelt to supply streams and tributaries that flow into Po River, farmers in Italy's Emilia-Romagna region worry they might have to abandon traditional crops like corn and soy and plant sunflowers instead.

The region is one of Italy's most productive agricultural areas. The lack of water could also affect the supply of animal feed for Emilia-Romagna's cows and pigs, whose milk and meat are



**A view of the peninsula of Sirmione, on Garda lake, Italy, on, Aug. 12, 2022.**

essential to producing Parmigiano Reggiano cheese and prized prosciutto.

France recorded 32 days without rain this winter — the longest such winter drought since record-keeping began in 1959. Snow levels in the French Alps, the Pyrenees and other French mountain ranges are also much lower than usual for this time of year, according to the national weather service.

Since snowmelt is crucial to filling rivers and reservoirs, weather watchers are worried about depleted water supplies later this year. Around France, residents are sharing images of dried-up riverbeds and shrunken lakes — shocking sights in

the depths of winter.

French President Emmanuel Macron promised his government would devise an urgent "water plan" in mid-March.

The last two summers in France also were exceptionally dry, prompting some farmers to consider switching to new crops. Italy last year reeled under its worst drought in 70 years, and the Po, its longest river, turned into a long stretch of sand. The drought battered the rice plants that supply the main ingredient for risotto.

What precipitation Italy received in late February seemed to do more harm than good for some farmers. A combination of lower

temperatures, snow and frost threatened fruit crops that, due to a warmer winter, had already started blooming, notably almond, peach and cherry trees, the agricultural farm lobby Coldiretti said this week.

"The arrival of precipitation in any case won't succeed in making up for the water deficit in a situation in which Italy is 30% short of water, with the percentage rising to 40% in north Italy," Coldiretti noted, citing data from Italy's National Research Council.

While briefing lawmakers Wednesday, Italy's minister of agriculture and food sovereignty, Francesco Lollobrigida, described the lack of water as an emer-

gency. He cited infrastructure as a contributor to the problem.

"We must intervene with planning for the long-, medium- and short-term period to make aqueducts, which have leakage as high as almost 50%, more efficient and devise a plan for reservoirs and water basins," Lollobrigida said.

Experts from the National Research Council, which is known by its Italian acronym CNR, observed last month that the "snow, which fell at the end of the month after various weeks, isn't sufficient to reach the average values of the 2011-2021 decade, above all on the Alps."

Earlier this week, France's environment minister ordered officials who are working on what Macron's government calls its "water sobriety plan" to take immediate steps to restrict water usage to ensure there is enough water this summer.

Four regions in southern France — Isere, Var, Bouches-du Rhone and the Pyrenees — already have water restrictions in place, and 10 other departments were placed on the vigilance list. In Germany, experts say that rain around the start of the year will not be enough to replenish deeper parts of the soil that have become worryingly dry in recent years. □

## New Easter Island statue found in volcanic crater's dry lake

**SANTIAGO, Chile (AP)** — Researchers have found a new moai statue in a dry lake on the Chilean island of Rapa Nui, joining the approximately 1,000 other

iconic monolithic sculptures on what is internationally known as Easter Island. The statue is relatively small at 1.6 meters (5.2 feet), as compared with some of

the other broadly featured heads and torsos that reach as tall as 22 meters (72 feet). It was found by researchers from the University of Chile and O'Higgins University.

More statues might be found in the dry lake, which is at the center of the Rano Raraku volcanic crater, said Salvador Atan Hito, vice president of the Ma'u Henua indigenous community that manages Rapa Nui's archeological treasures.

The statue "is in good condition, it has wear from time, erosion, water, but its

shapes and features are still very noticeable," Atan told The Associated Press in an interview Wednesday.

"This discovery is something historic for this new generation," he added.

About 400 of the island's 1,000 moai are inside the volcanic crater or on its outer slopes, and the rest are scattered around the rest of the island's 160 square kilometers (60 square miles).

Some of the moai are known to be buried under the surface though they have been left in place. However, this latest one

had not previously been cataloged, Atan said.

The figures represent the ancestors of the Rapa Nui community, and their role is to protect community members, which is why they were placed looking inward from the sea, Atan said.

Rapa Nui, located 3,700 kilometers (2,300 miles) from the continent, was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1995. In 2019, it was renamed "Rapa Nui-Easter Island" from its previous name of Easter Island. □



**Moai statues stand on Ahu Tongariki near the Rano Raraku volcano, top, on Rapa Nui, or Easter Island, Chile, Nov. 27, 2022.**

**Associated Press**

## Prime Minister of Aruba meets with the American ambassador in The Netherlands



(Oranjestad)—This week, Prime Minister Evelyn Wever-Croes met with American ambassador Mrs. Shefali Razdan Duggal who is currently visiting the island. Ambassador Duggal has been an ambassador for a few months now in The Netherlands and wanted to get to know Aruba and interchange perspectives on different topics.

One of the topics discussed involves the issue of the Venezuelan border and how to best approach this. America offered its help in this. Another topic was the general recovery on the island, tourism, economic investments and the diversification of the economy. Prime Minister Wever-Croes explained to the ambassador the various opportunities on the island to diversify the sector of energy, which is an area the US is very interested in investing in.

Furthermore, plans for the Hydrogen Valley by Minister Glenbert Croes were also elaborated on, as well as the concerning situation of asylum, immigration on the island and drug trafficking from the South American continent to the island. Aruba, The Netherlands and the US are working hard in maintaining our waters safe and will therefore be intensifying their cooperation.

Another important topic concerned human trafficking, which unfortunately is also a reality on the island. During this meeting, Mrs. Jeanette Richardson-Baars, chief of the Coordination Center on Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling Aruba" (CMAA) / Mensenhandel Mensensmokkel was also present. The prime minister explained that CMAA is paying close attention on the developments of human trafficking on the island.

### Jeanette Richardson-Baars (CMAA)

During the meeting, Mrs. Richardson-Baars provided the ambassador insight in all the work that CMAA does to fight human trafficking, as well as sharing some challenges that the organization faces and what can be done to improve Aruba's position in this. According to Richardson-Baars, the ambassador suggested to pay attention in helping the Chinese and Indian communities on the island, as not much information is known about them in comparison to the Venezuelan and Colombian communities on the island.

Furthermore, Mrs. Razdan Duggal offered her help to stimulate interest in these topics in The Netherlands: "It's always good when international government representatives pay a visit and give their support," she stated. In conclusion, the prime ministers expressed that the meeting was fruitful and though intense, it went very well. □



## Smoking around the area of hospital Dr. Horacio Oduber is forbidden



(Oranjestad)—Yesterday morning the minister of Tourism and Health, Dangui Oduber, along with board director of the hospital (HOH), Jacco Voegop and board member Gregory Creeze, held a press conference to further discuss this new development at the local hospital.

Minister Oduber pointed out that this is an example for all government companies and institutions. It is an important step in the implementation of the National Ordinance Restricting Tobacco Products (AB2016 no.41).

As it is already known, this law had been implemented on May 2nd, 2022. This law prohibits the people under 21 years of age from buying or consuming tobacco products, or to work in near places that sell tobacco products. Additionally, the law prohibits smoking in a building of public area.

For this reason, HOH decided to implement this law in which they will be reinforcing a ban on smoking cigarettes, electric cigarettes or any other type of product that contains tobacco on the premises of the hospital, LABHOH and Blood Bank, as well as inside the building and parking lots. The minister stated that this prohibition is one the important aspects in Aruba's plan for disease preven-

tion, and which dedicates in the improvement of life, services and health for the Aruban community.

Jacco Voegop pointed out that "HOH, LABHOH and Blood Bank focuses on providing better care and service to our patients and clients. The health of the workers, patients and visitors is our priority. This is why we had made the decision to make the hospital completely smoking-free, because we are the ambassadors of health on the island."

The hospital has been working hard to provide information and offer workers interested coaching sessions with lung specialists to stop smoking. Moreover, they are also working on a plan to figure out how bring the best service and care to patients admitted at the hospital that may have an addiction to any tobacco product.

It is important to mention that the law prohibits people from smoking in public places. In case there is smoking around the hospital area, Gregory Creeze insured that there will be personnel on the premises to stop this. In the worst case scenario, the hospital will contact local authorities to remove the smoker from the premises, as this can risk the hospital in getting fined. □



## Costa Linda hosts Teddy's Horse Shoe Tournament



During the Month of February Costa Linda hosts Horse shoe tournaments in coordination with a group of owners. This tournament has been taking place for many years now.

On February 21st we had

the Teddy's horse shoe tournament organized by Mr Teddy's group of friends. This year there were around 40 players competing. The event was organized once again this year and was a great success. There were refreshments and

food for both participants and friends made by the Chef Dean. The event was again this year a great success where there was refreshments and Chef Dean took care of the food for participants and friends cheering.



This year's winners were Craig Farley and Debbie Winsor with second place going to Dave Pullara and Dean Bach.

Congratulations to the winners and Thank you to all who participated and made this tournament such a success. □



Aruba Today is delighted to share to its readers a new segment called "Beauty and the Beach", where we take a minute to honor our guests who have decided to spend their vacation on our beautiful and warm island.

In this edition, we'd like to give a shout out to **Diane from Ontario, Canada**, who loves the beach, the food and the people of the island. Aruba is always proud to host all families and guests. We at Aruba Today encourage any visitor of the island to send in their pictures and/or messages; who knows? You might get on the cover!

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**EAGLE BEACH** - Recently, Aruba Tourism Authority representative Ms. Kimberley Richardson had the great pleasure in honoring many loyal Aruba visitors with their distinctive certificates. These certificates are a way to say "Masha Danki" for continuously choosing Aruba as a favorite vacation destination. The titles are as following: 10+ years "Distinguished Visitor", 20+ years "Goodwill Ambassador" and 36+ years "Emerald Ambassador".

The honorees are **Mr. Ron-**

**ald & Roberta Diamond-**stein from Pennsylvania, United States who have been honored as Emerald Ambassadors.

The greatest award we provide is the Emerald Ambassador certificate, which is granted to travelers who have visited Aruba continuously for 35 years or more. The ceremony was significant to us because it was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to celebrate guests who had been coming to Aruba for more than 35 years. The Diamondstein's have been visiting Aruba

for 38 years consecutively! This symbolic honorary title is presented on behalf of the Minister of Tourism as a token of appreciation to the guests who visit Aruba between the 10-20-35 and more consecutive year mark.

The top reasons for returning to Aruba provided by the Diamondstein's were: Aruba's year-round sunny weather

Aruba's nice sandy beaches and picturesque sunsets  
Aruba's warm & friendly people



Aruba's delicious variety of foods  
Aruba's safety

Ms. Kimberley Richardson representing the Aruba Tourism Authority, and members of the Aruba

Beach Club bestowed the honor certifications to the honorees, presented them with gifts, and also thanked them for choosing Aruba as their favorite vacation destination and as their home-away-from-home. □

**Aruba Tourism Authority honored loyal visitors at the Casa Del Mar Beach Resort**

**EAGLE BEACH** - Recently, Aruba Tourism Authority representative Ms. Kimberley Richardson had the great pleasure in honoring many loyal Aruba visitors with their distinctive certificates. These certificates are a way to say "Masha Danki" for continuously choosing Aruba as a favorite vacation destination. The titles are as following: 10+ years "Distinguished Visitor", 20+ years "Goodwill Ambassador" and 36+ years "Emerald Ambassador".

The honorees are Mr. Ronald & Mrs. Sue Carletta from New Jersey, United States who have been honored as Emerald Ambassadors.

This symbolic honorary title is presented on behalf of the Minister of Tourism as a token of appreciation to the guests who visit Aruba between the 10-20-35 and more consecutive year mark.

The greatest award we provide is the Emerald Ambassador certificate, which is granted to travelers who have visited Aruba continuously for 35 years or more. The ceremony was significant to us because it was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to



celebrate guests who had been coming to Aruba for more than 35 years. The Carletta's have been visiting Aruba for over 37 years consecutively!

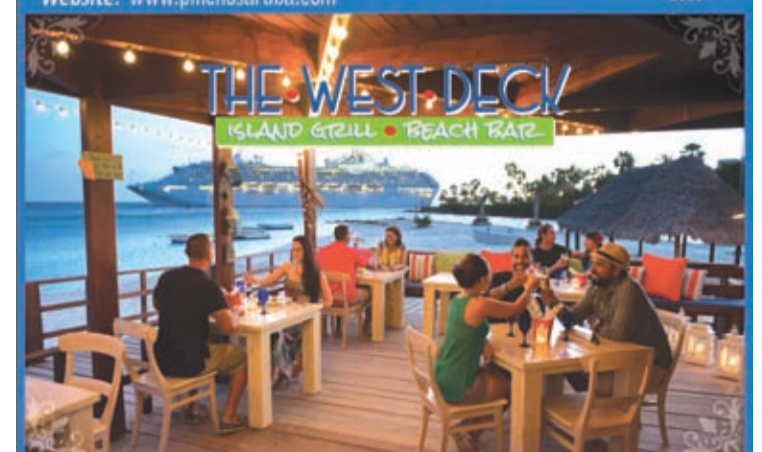
The top reason for returning to Aruba provided by the Carletta's is:

Aruba's year-round sunny weather  
Aruba's nice sandy beaches and picturesque sunsets  
Aruba's people  
Aruba's delicious variety of foods  
Aruba's safety

Ms. Kimberley Richardson representing the Aruba Tourism Authority, and members of the Casa Del Mar Beach Resort bestowed the honor certifications to the honorees, presented them with gifts, and also thanked them for choosing Aruba as their favorite vacation destination and as their home-away-from-home. □



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# Today Is Going To Be A Good Day

Here's why: Aruba Today collected some things to do BEYOND the beach. Yes, we know. Aruba, located 15 miles north of Venezuela in the warm waters of the southern Caribbean, is home to beautiful white-sand beaches, 82-degree days, and thus ideal for the perfect beach day. But we are also blessed with some of the warmest people in the world and our island is 19.6 miles long and 6 miles across, with a total area of 70 square miles. Bit more to discover than the white stretch on the coastline we say. Let's mention some of these hidden gems.

## Nature Calls

The Arikok National park is worth the ride. We love the hikes that are guided by the park's rangers whose job is to maintain trails and protect natural resources. The flora and fauna are beautiful and the historical sites tell you about the island's indigenous roots. The guided tours are even free of charge. If you are not up to walking, you can drive through the park, one way or another this park is a great place to spend an entire day. Cruising through the landscape you end up at some of the most stunning beaches like Dos Playa or Daimara Beach. In Total the park consists of 7907 acres protected nature with a richness of animals living in it. The Aruban whiptail lizard (cododo), Aruban cat eye snake (santanero) and endangered rattle snake (cascabel) are just some of them, you can also admire these close in the park's Visitors' Center. For more information, visit the website [www.arubanationalpark.org](http://www.arubanationalpark.org)

## The Lighthouse

No, you would not think of this as a hidden gem. The California Lighthouse is actually one of the most



known highlights in Aruba and many repeated guests most probably took the ride uphill already. But, there is a significant change to this tower. Since September 2016 you can climb the top. In 2015 Stichting Monumentenfonds started the restoration of the California Lighthouse. The project finished in September 2016 and the Lighthouse is now open for visitors to enjoy the beautiful view from the top. The construction of the California Lighthouse started in 1915. The name 'California' came from a vessel of the West India Company and Pacific Steamship Co. called 'California' that shipwrecked in the area in 1891. Therefore they came up with the idea of building a lighthouse that could indicate the island's eastern tip to ships with its light. [www.arubalighthouse.com](http://www.arubalighthouse.com) will give you more information.

## Kayak in the Mangroves

Mangel Halto at Savaneta is definitely a place not to miss out on. The beautiful beach with the natural mangroves is simply a beauty, but if you are into a more active way to enjoy the nature: take a kayak. While you are doing some workout -as it might get a little

windy and rough-, you will see the island from a different perspective. You can even make a stop to do some snorkeling at the reef. Its fun, it's healthy and for sure something else. There are several companies that offer kayak tours, we had good experience with The Shack Kayak Tours Aruba, find them on Facebook.□



# Origin of Papiamentu- Aruba's native language

ORANJESTAD — Papiamentu, Creole language of ABC (Aruba, Bonaire and Curacao) is from the Cape Verdean Creole family (Cape Verdean language) and was taken to the Caribbean in the 9th century by the Cape Verdeans of that time (linings and slaves), experts in cane culture and sugar production, and who were hired by Jewish entrepreneurs who went to invest in this business in the Caribbean. Cape Verdeans taught this pre-industrial revolution technology (planting cane and producing sugar, which they had learned from Madeirans) to slaves from other African regions, and did so in their language, Cape Verde Creole (Cape Verdean language), hence the language implanted in Aruba, Bonaire and Curacao.

Unlike many interesting stories, wanting to link Papiamentu directly to Portuguese, Galician or Castilian (see Papiamentu, on Wikipedia - Portuguese version and Spanish version, where the Portuguese and Spanish, each claim the direct origin of Papiamentu), in



fact, this is not true. Papiamentu is not direct from Portuguese, Galician or Castilian, it is from the Cape

Verde Creole family (Cape Verdean language). You can see this best when it's saying obscene words and

offending someone, precisely as they say today in both ABC and Cape Verde islands. The obscene words kept the original, had no lexical influence either from Castilian or Dutch. Also the PapiCristang of Malacca, the Patuá of Macau, and several creoles from the east (from Daman, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Philippines, Indonesia) and Africa (Casamança, Guinea Bissau, Sierra Leone and Nigeria, these last two releases to the English), all originated in the Creole of Cabo Verde (Cape Verdean language), which was the French language spoken in Portuguese feitorias on the coast of Africa (from Senegal to Sierra Leone), and which was taken east by the thousands of cable - Verdeans (linings and slaves, already Christianized and speaking Creole) who served as sailors and "slaves of arms" in Portuguese caravels, demanding the east. I don't know why the official history of Portugal usually omits this fact, which is in the chronicles of the quinrentist chroniclers, but which we never saw in the history of Portugal that we study

from primary education to higher education. However, it has always been tried to deceive us, in colonial time, that we were descendants of Viriato (Iberian hero in the fight against the Romans) and the pastors of the Hermini Mountains, but not much speaking of our black-African ancestry.

We Cape Verdeans understand each other very well with these Antillans and Easterns, whose language is from the same Creole family of Cape Verde (Cape Verdean language), speaking their Creole and we ours. Therefore, Papiamentu, PapiCristang, PatuáMacaense and the creoles, said of Portuguese origin, Daman, India, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, some locations in the Philippines and some places in Indonesia, are creoles of the language family Cape Verde Creole (Cape Verdean language) and indirectly the Galaico-Duriense or Galaico-Portuguese, a language that the people spoke in Portugal in the 6th and 7th century.

**Anonymous**  
**Source: Dushi Aruba**

## 11-year-old Fabio Alexander fights for his dream of playing soccer for Real Madrid

(Oranjestad)—Fabio Alexander Montilla is an 11-year-old boy with a love for soccer. He currently plays for the local club RCA and Team Dreyer, with whom he recently to Colombia with to play in the Future Soccer Cup Tournament (FSC). In March, Fabio Alexander had the once in a lifetime opportunity to play in Madrid, Spain, in the Real Madrid Foundation World Challenge Tournament 2023.

Last year, Alexander was a part of the Real Madrid Foundation Clinic that took place in Aruba. Through this, coupled with his talent, dedication, discipline and love for soccer, Alexander received an invitation to travel to Madrid and realize the dream that a lot of kids, adults and soccer fanatics have: playing soccer in Madrid for the foundation of one of the biggest soccer club in the world, Real Madrid.

"I'm very happy that I received an invitation. It's going to be a once in a lifetime experience that I will never forget. I'm very excited to play in Madrid and even meet some of the professional players, if I'm lucky," Alexander expressed.

To make this dream a reality, Alexander's parents has to cover the travel costs to Madrid. Bon Dia Aruba talked with Alexander's mother, Claudia Meriño, who explained more about the costs.

"It's a big sum, but we are working hard to make his dream come true. It's not cheap, we have to pay for everything. They are offering a package that includes accommodation,



food, transport and a few tours, plus uniform and entry for the tournament for the plus one. However, even with all these things covered, it's still very expensive and we still have to pay for Alexander and his plus one's flight," Meriño explained.

The tournament will take place from March 31st to April 8th. If anyone is interested in contributing in Alexander's dream, Claudia is available through phone call at 7307325. "Any help or contribution, no matter how big or small, will be greatly appreciated," Meriño finalized. □



# CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS 45 Neigh

1 Back biter sayer

6 Gem unit 46 Ledger

11 Find item  
darling

12 Un-  
escorted

13 Quick  
kisses

14 Summit  
goals

15 Young  
foxes

17 Revue  
segment

18 Chef's  
need

20 Long-  
snouted  
fish

22 Make  
fun of

23 Holiday  
events

26 Stylishly  
quaint

28 Prelude

29 Sticks

31 Owns

32 Puts away

33 Mexican  
coin

34 Bounders

36 Thick slice

38 Distant

40 African  
lilies

43 Cherry  
center

44 Pageant  
crown

## DOWN

1 Travel  
aid

2 Poem of  
praise

3 Prevented  
intruders,  
in a way

4 Alan of  
"Argo"

5 Breather

6 Upper  
limit

7 Nome  
native

8 Caused  
trouble

9 Against

10 Midterm,  
for one

16 Relaxing  
retreat

18 Gumbo  
base

19 Competed

21 Eye part

23 Cruise  
stop

24 Important  
times

25 Mediocre

27 Grounds

30 Slalom

33 Michael  
of Monty  
Python

34 Moolah

35 Choir

37 Past due

39 Clinic cost

41 Go wrong

42 Utter

AXYDLBAAXR

IS LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's. X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

## CRYPTOQUOTE

XUIJ UH SKJ IXEPIY IEY

PKULK XERJ UH SKJ KEMJG.

— RULSEY KAVE

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: SOMEONE ASKED ME. IF I WERE STRANDED ON A DESERT ISLAND, WHAT BOOK WOULD I BRING: "HOW TO BUILD A BOAT." STEVEN WRIGHT

S	I	R	S		H	O	L	D	I	T
T	R	O	Y		A	R	O	U	S	E
A	M	A	S		T	A	V	E	R	N
B	A	D	T	A	S	T	E			
		H	E	M		E	T	H	A	N
R	O	O	M	S		S	T	O	L	E
A	B	U					N	O	W	
P	O	S	I	T		R	A	K	E	S
T	E	E	N	Y		A	M	Y		
			S	C	I	M	I	T	A	R
S	A	L	O	O	N		G	O	N	E
A	V	A	L	O	N		A	N	T	E
L	A	T	E	N	S		S	K	I	D

## Yesterday's answer

10 Midterm, for one

16 Relaxing retreat

18 Gumbo base

19 Competed

21 Eye part

23 Cruise stop

24 Important times

25 Mediocre

27 Grounds

30 Slalom

33 Michael of Monty Python

34 Moolah

35 Choir

37 Past due

39 Clinic cost

41 Go wrong

42 Utter

# Shoe polish stands begin to vanish, lose their shine

By MAE ANDERSON and TED SHAFFREY

The Associated Press

**NEW YORK (AP)** — On a recent winter weekday at Penn Station Shoe Repair and Shoe Shine, men hop onto shoeshine chairs and pull out newspapers and phones to read while shoeshiners get to work applying polish and elbow grease to loafers, boots and other leather shoes. When finished, these customers hand over \$8 in cash at a counter where a sign reads "We're not God, but we do save soles."

Shoeshining has a vaunted history in the U.S. In the 1860s, Horatio Alger popularized the "rags-to-riches" American narrative with his book "Ragged Dick" about a shoeshiner (or "boot-black") who works his way up to wealth. "Shoeshine boys" (and occasional girls) have subsequently been in countless movies and TV shows. Today, the tradition of getting a quick polish from a rag-toting shoeshiner is greatly diminished, and many stands similar to the one in Penn Station have disappeared across the country. The decline has been exacerbated by the pandemic, remote working and the rise in popularity of more casual workwear when people did return to the office. SC Johnson, which makes the biggest shoe polish brand, Kiwi, even said in January that it had stopped selling the brand in the U.K. due to softening demand (they still sell it in the U.S.)

The last time the Census listed shoeshining as a discrete business was 2007, when only 30 establishments were counted. The more-encompassing shoe



Customer Ray Ozoria gets a shoeshine from Bertha Gomez at the Alpha Shoe Repair Corp., Friday, Feb. 3, 2023, in New York. Associated Press

repair market has declined an estimated 23% between 2013 and 2023 to \$307 million, according to market research firm IBISWorld. Shoe polish sales in 2022 totaled 27.3 million units, down 29% compared with 2019, according to figures from Nielsen, a sign of the changes brought on by the pandemic.

Nisan Khaimov, who owns the Penn Station stand, said his stand would shine 80 to 100 shoes each workday before the pandemic. Now it's between 30 to 50 on Tuesday to Thursday, and even fewer on Mondays and Fridays. Hybrid work is hurting his business. "Until people come back to work, the problems will not be solved," said Khaimov, who benefits from commuters traveling in and out of New York City who can't get their shoes shined where they live. "And it's not good for landlords and for tenants also like us. So, we're waiting. But eventually it will go back to normal, we hope. But when we don't know."

Rory Heenan, 38, an accountant in Philadelphia, said that as a young boy

he would take the train with his father on his way to work one Friday each month and watch him get a shoeshine.

"I would just sit here as a little guy, you know, observing," he said. "And here I am, you know, 30 years later, doing the same thing. So, it's certainly something that's passed down over time."

Across town, in the corridor between the subway and The Port Authority bus terminal, Jairo Cardenas is also feeling the pinch. Business at Alpha Shoes Repair Corp., which he's run for 33 years, is down 75% compared with prior to the pandemic. He's down to one shoeshiner, from the three he employed before the pandemic. His shoeshiners used to shine 60 or 70 shoes a day. Now a good day is 10 to 15 shines.

Cardenas' landlord gave him a break on rent, but he's still struggling, and has seen several other shoeshine stores in the area close. Still, he is noticing an uptick in people returning to work and hopes business slowly returns to normal by the spring. □

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# Carbon dioxide emissions reached a record high in 2022

By CATHY BUSSEWITZ

AP Energy Writer

**NEW YORK (AP)** — Communities around the world emitted more carbon dioxide in 2022 than in any other year on records dating to 1900, a result of air travel rebounding from the pandemic and more cities turning to coal as a low-cost source of power.

Emissions of the climate-warming gas that were caused by energy production grew 0.9% to reach 36.8 gigatons in 2022, the International Energy Agency reported Thursday. (The mass of one gigaton is equivalent to about 10,000 fully loaded aircraft carriers, according to NASA.) Carbon dioxide is released when fossil fuels such as oil, coal or natural gas are burned to power cars, planes, homes and factories. When the gas enters the atmosphere, it traps heat and contributes to the warming of the the climate.

Extreme weather events intensified last year's carbon dioxide emissions: Droughts reduced the amount of water available for hydro-power, which increased the need to burn fossil fuels. And heat waves drove up demand for electricity. Thursday's report was described as disconcerting by climate scientists, who warn that energy users around the world must cut emissions dramatically to slow the dire consequences of global warming.



An American Airlines plane lands at Logan International Airport, Thursday, Jan. 26, 2023, in Boston.

Associated Press

“Any emissions growth — even 1% — is a failure,” said Rob Jackson, a professor of earth system science at Stanford University and chairman of the Global Carbon Project, an international group. “We can't afford growth. We can't afford stasis. It's cuts or chaos for the planet. Any year with higher coal emissions is a bad year for our health and for the Earth.”

Carbon dioxide emissions from coal grew 1.6% last year. Many communities, primarily in Asia, switched from natural gas to coal to avoid high natural gas prices that were worsened by Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the IEA said.

And as global airline traffic increased, carbon dioxide emissions from burning oil grew 2.5%, with about half the surge resulting from the aviation sector.

Global emissions have grown in most years since 1900 and have accelerated over time, according to

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data from IEA. One exception was the pandemic year of 2020, when travel all but came to a standstill. Last year's level of emissions, though a record high, was nevertheless lower than experts had expected. Increased deployment of renewable energy, electric vehicles and heat pumps together helped prevent an additional 550 megatons of carbon dioxide emissions, the IEA said. □



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2 Bed Ocean view \$9,000  
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3 Bed Ocean view \$16,500

## Marriott Aruba Ocean Club PLATINUM SEASON

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2 Bed Ocean view \$23,750  
1 Bed Ocean front \$21,000  
1 Bed Ocean View \$15,000  
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# 'Operation Fortune' is a by-the-numbers spy caper

By **JOCELYN NOVECK**  
AP National Writer

So what the heck is in the shiny alligator briefcase? That essential question lingers over much — too much — of the running time of "Operation Fortune: Ruse de Guerre," Guy Ritchie's stylish but ultimately frustratingly half-baked spy caper. Everyone wants the \$10 billion contents of the briefcase, but we don't know exactly who's selling, who's buying and most importantly, what's in there. Not to stretch a metaphor, but this shiny case rather ends up becoming one for the movie itself: made of the finest materials — for example, crowd-pleasing cast members Aubrey Plaza and Hugh Grant — and hinting at sophistication and panache, while ending up as something of a head-scratcher. Of course, for some, especially fans of Jason Statham, it will likely be enough just watching this Ritchie favorite practice his well-honed talent for hand-to-hand combat, casually dispatching a cascade of bad guys in leather jackets as the titular Orson Fortune, a perpetually annoyed, phobia-plagued, expen-



This image released by Lionsgate shows Jason Statham, from left, Josh Hartnett and Aubrey Plaza in a scene from "Operation Fortune: Ruse de Guerre."

Associated Press

sive wine-loving private contractor. But it seems that Ritchie, who both co-wrote and directed, is going for something more sophisticated here. The first hint: That title. Perhaps you weren't familiar with the French term "ruse de guerre"? Well, it signifies a ruse of war, or stratagem of war, or plan or scheme ... exactly what Fortune and his team need to counter the shady arms dealers, tech moguls and familiar rivals all seeking to recover The Handle, which

is what they call that elusive thing everyone's fighting over. We begin with Nathan (Cary Elwes), posh and pretty annoyed himself. The head of a covert spy agency, Nathan has been summoned by the government in London (why the graphics team felt it was necessary to specify "London, ENGLAND" is not clear) to head up a team. Why, he asks, is official intelligence not handling this? "Ah, ruse de guerre, Nathan" he's told — meaning this job

needs an extra je-ne-sais-quoi. Enter Fortune (Statham), who's vacationing in Morocco when he's told he has about two minutes to accept his new mission. He's given two helpers, or "footmen": Sarah (Plaza) and J.J. (Bugzy Malone). The latter is good with weapons, and Sarah is a tech whiz, seemingly able to hack into anything. The ever watchable Plaza, with her trademark flat delivery and expertly doled out sass, is a highlight of this

cast, in the only substantial female role. Like most of the characters, though, hers is barely fleshed out. It's also unfortunate that she's called upon to be sexy and seductive, as if this is simply the lot of any woman in an action thriller. Can't we just have a talented female tech wizard? In any case, the team's initial target is billionaire arms dealer Greg Simmonds (Grant, reuniting with Ritchie from "The Gentlemen"), who is brokering the deal. Before they show up at his glittering charity event in Cannes, though, their luxury jet makes a detour to Hollywood, to pick up their "invitation": Danny Francesco, an action movie star that Simmonds is obsessed with. Danny is a willing accomplice — well, not really, but he's blackmailed with compromising information about his sex life. His job is to "play" himself and befriend Simmonds so the team can get to the dealer's phone. Orson will play Danny's manager, and Sarah the girlfriend — a convenient reason to get Plaza dolled up in a series of slinky outfits with up-to-there slits. □

## Wayne Shorter, jazz saxophone pioneer, dies at 89



Jazz saxophonist Wayne Shorter performs at the 5 Continents Jazz Festival in Marseille, southern France on July 23, 2013.

Associated Press

By The Associated Press  
**LOS ANGELES (AP)**—Wayne Shorter, an influential jazz innovator whose lyrical, complex jazz compositions and pioneering saxophone

playing sounded through more than half a century of American music, has died. He was 89. Shorter died Thursday in Los Angeles, a representative

for the musician said. No cause of death was given. Shorter, a tenor saxophonist, made his debut in 1959 and would go on to be a foundational member of two of the most seminal jazz groups: Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers and the Miles Davis Quintet. Over the next eight decades, Shorter's wide-spanning collaborations would include co-founding the '70s fusion band Weather Report, some 10 album appearances with Joni Mitchell and further explorations with Carlos Santana and Steely Dan. Many of Shorter's textured and elliptical compositions — including "Speak No Evil," "Black Nile," "Footprints," and "Nefertiti" — became modern jazz standards and expanded the harmonic

horizons of jazz across some of its most fast-evolving eras. Herbie Hancock once said of Shorter in Miles Davis's Second Great Quintet: "The master writer to me, in that group, was Wayne Shorter. He still is a master. Wayne was one of the few people who brought music to Miles that didn't get changed." As a band leader, Shorter released more than 25 albums. He won 11 Grammy awards and in 2015 was given a lifetime achievement Grammy. Wayne Shorter, jazz saxophone pioneer, dies at 89. By The Associated Press undefined  
**LOS ANGELES (AP)** — Wayne Shorter, an influential jazz innovator whose lyrical, complex jazz compositions and pioneering

saxophone playing sounded through more than half a century of American music, has died. He was 89. Shorter died Thursday in Los Angeles, a representative for the musician said. No cause of death was given. Shorter, a tenor saxophonist, made his debut in 1959 and would go on to be a foundational member of two of the most seminal jazz groups: Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers and the Miles Davis Quintet. Over the next eight decades, Shorter's wide-spanning collaborations would include co-founding the '70s fusion band Weather Report, some 10 album appearances with Joni Mitchell and further explorations with Carlos Santana and Steely Dan. □

# Motorsport and others joining to fight online abuse

By JEROME PUGMIRE AP  
Auto Racing Writer

Motorsport's governing body will attempt to drive out online hate speech and abuse by collaborating with other affected groups.

The FIA said it has support from the European Commission, motorcycling's governing body, and Professional Game Match Officials Limited — the body responsible for match officials in English professional soccer — to tackle the problems.

The FIA revealed its strategic approach in a white paper on Thursday that "sets out the sustained and collaborative approach the FIA will adopt in confronting online toxicity," it said in a statement.

The document called "A Strategic Response To Online Hate Speech In Sport" has drawn on expertise from industry experts and government institutions. It was presented to the FIA's 241 member clubs and also shared at a World Motor Sport Council in Bahrain on Thursday ahead of the season-opening Formula One race on Sunday.

Across the European Union, 80% of people surveyed had encountered online hate, and 40% of respondents claimed they were left frightened or threat-



Associated Press

ened, the white paper said. Seven-time Formula One champion Lewis Hamilton, who is the only Black driver in F1, has been the victim of online abuse.

Mercedes, the FIA and F1 in 2021 issued a joint statement condemning the racist abuse aimed at Hamilton following the Mercedes driver's crash with rival Max Verstappen on the opening lap of the British Grand Prix. After crashing late in the season-ending Abu Dhabi GP in 2021, F1 driver Nicholas Latifi was subjected to online abuse and death threats and hired a bodyguard on a day trip to

London.

Latifi's crash led to a safety car, and late drama followed as Verstappen overtook Hamilton on the last lap to win the world title in one of the most controversial moments in F1 history. Hamilton urged social media companies to do more to stop the spread of online abuse after Latifi's abuse. Former F1 race director Michael Masi, who made the decision to restart the race and eventually left the FIA, also faced a torrent of hatred and abuse.

"They were shocking. Racist, abusive, vile, they called me every name under the

sun. And there were death threats. People saying they were going to come after me and my family," Masi said in an interview with Australia's NewsCorp in July. "And they kept on coming. Not just on my Facebook but also on my LinkedIn, which is supposed to be a professional platform for business. It was the same type of abuse." Last year, Hamilton said F1 should push away archaic "old voices" and focus on becoming more inclusive, after comments made by three-time F1 champion Nelson Piquet referring to Hamilton by a racial term.

Two-time F1 champion Fernando Alonso has several times called for social networks to do more to curb online abuse. He was asked about the issue, if there had been improvements in the way F1 and the FIA deals with it.

"I think so. I think we are getting better as a sport in many, many areas. I think on this topic, there is always never enough," the Aston Martin driver said at the Bahrain GP. "But I think we have a good leadership right now. And we are in good hands. So I think we are moving in the right direction."

The FIA's online abuse working group has secured support for its strategic approach from the European Commission through an endorsement from Mariya Gabriel, the European Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth.

PGMOL managing director Mike Riley, a former Premier League referee, welcomed the FIA actions.

"PGMOL is hugely supportive of the progressive steps taken by the FIA in addressing the issue of online abuse," Riley said. "During recent discussions, we have together identified that common challenges are shared around the abuse of our officials." □

## Djokovic to face Medvedev in Dubai semis, Rublev gets Zverev

**DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP)** — Top-ranked Novak Djokovic beat Hubert Hurkacz 6-3, 7-5 on Thursday and will face former No. 1 Daniil Medvedev in the semifinals at the Dubai Championships.

The five-time Dubai champion's 20th straight victory set the stage for a last-four match against Medvedev, who defeated Borna Coric 6-3, 6-2 in the nightcap at the hard-court tournament. "I'm playing good right now but when you play Novak, Novak is always the favorite," Medvedev said in his on-court interview. "He's playing great, moving great. I always had some good fights with him, so I'm

hoping for my best shape tomorrow because that's the only way to beat him." Djokovic is playing in his first event since winning the Australian Open for his record-equaling 22nd Grand Slam singles title. The 35-year-old Serb had a partially torn hamstring when he captured his 10th title at Melbourne Park.

Djokovic improved to 15-0 this season and hasn't lost since dropping the Paris Masters final to Holger Rune last November. He followed that up by winning the ATP Finals title in Turin.

Defending Dubai champion Andrey Rublev will face Alexander Zverev in the other semifinal match.

Rublev advanced by defeating Botic van de Zandschulp 6-3, 7-6 (3). Zverev topped Lorenzo Sonego 7-5, 6-4.

It will be Zverev's first semifinal since the French Open last June, when he injured his right ankle while playing against Rafael Nadal. He underwent surgery days later to repair torn ligaments. "It's been a very difficult time for me the last, I would say, nine months," the 25-year-old German, who was the runner-up at the 2020 U.S. Open, said in his on-court interview. "The hard work is paying off and I'm extremely happy with what the progress is and how I'm playing right now."



Serbia's Novak Djokovic celebrates after he beats Poland's Hubert Hurkacz during their quarter final match of the Dubai Duty Free Tennis Championships in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, Thursday, March 1, 2023.

Associated Press

Rublev, a 25-year-old Russian who is ranked No. 6,

reached the semifinals for the third straight year. □

# Jon Jones hopes to end any doubts about best ever at UFC 285

By Mark Anderson  
AP Sports Writer

**LAS VEGAS (AP)** — Jon Jones has spent the past three years at his home in Albuquerque, New Mexico, focusing on being with family, hunting and getting ready for his big comeback.

He hired a team to help him get ready for Saturday night when he will take a step up to the heavyweight division and attempt to end any doubt — if any remains — that he is the greatest fighter in UFC history.

He made that case as a light heavyweight by winning a record 14 title fights and is on a UFC-best 18-match unbeaten streak, giving him a 26-1 record with one no-contest. Next up is France's Ciry Gane, who at 11-1 is the top-ranked heavyweight.

A victory also could put Jones, 35, back in the conversation for top pound-for-pound fighter, a spot currently held by featherweight Alexander Volkanovski.

"I'm fighting to be the greatest fighter ever, not to be the best pound-for-pound right now," Jones said.

His fight against Gane for the vacant heavyweight title is the headline event of UFC 285. In the top un-



Jon Jones goes through his pre-fight routine in the ring before a light heavyweight mixed martial arts bout against Dominick Reyes at UFC 247, Saturday, Feb. 8, 2020, in Houston.

Associated Press

dercard match, women's flyweight champion Valentina Shevchenko (23-3) of Kyrgyzstan faces sixth-ranked Alexa Grasso (15-3) of Mexico.

Just about all eyes will be on Jones, who not only must prove that he can be just as successful in the heavyweight division as he was one level down, but also that the long lay-off won't negatively affect him.

Jones said he hasn't been idle even if he hasn't fought in the UFC since defeating

Dominick Reyes by unanimous decision on Feb. 8, 2020. He said he has become stronger than ever, even if his body isn't as toned. But Jones said that's because of the added weight to fight in the highest class.

Middleweight Dricus Du Plessis, who will face Derek Brunson in a preliminary bout, said he believes Jones will win and that he has the mental and physical ability to overcome such a long time away from competition. But Du Plessis also of-

fered a word of caution.

"Three years is a very long time," Du Plessis said. "I don't think he's a guy that's going to struggle with ring rust. I just think the game changes and it changes fast, especially these past two years. The game waits for no man."

Jones, for his part, is confident this fight will end like so many others.

He questioned Gane's willingness to fight, saying it didn't show up when he lost to Francis Ngannou by unanimous decision on

Jan. 22, 2022.

"I just don't see myself losing to a guy like Ciry Gane," Jones said.

Should Gane, a plus-138 underdog according to FanDuel Sportsbook, pull off the victory, it would set him up for a potentially big year. Not only would he claim the heavyweight belt, a win probably would put him in line for a meeting with second-ranked Stipe Miocic.

"This is going to put my resume at the high level for sure," said Gane, 32.

Even a victory, however, wouldn't put his resume on the same level as Jones.

But it's not all about what happens in the octagon with Jones. He was suspended for a year in 2016 for a failed drug test and had his 2017 victory over Daniel Cormier turned into a no-contest after another drug test came up positive. The United States Anti-Doping Agency changed the criteria for what constitutes a positive test in 2019, and Jones let it be known he would have passed under the revised standards.

"People considered me a cheater," Jones said. "Now if that same rule would have applied back then, it would have never even made the media. □"

# Lakers say LeBron James has tendon injury, out 3 weeks



Team LeBron forward LeBron James (6) dunks during the first half of the NBA basketball All-Star game Sunday, Feb. 19, 2023, in Salt Lake City.

Associated Press

By TIM REYNOLDS  
AP Basketball Writer

LeBron James is expected to miss most of March with an injured tendon in his right foot, the Los Angeles Lakers said on Thursday.

If that timetable holds, the Lakers will have to find a way to stay in the playoff race without the league's all-time scoring leader.

The Lakers did not disclose the full extent of the injury,

saying it was a tendon issue and that he will be "re-evaluated in approximately three weeks." If James misses three more weeks, starting with Thursday, that would keep him out for at least 10 of the Lakers' final 19 games.

James was hurt in the Lakers' win at Dallas on Sunday. He has already missed two games with the injury, with the Lakers splitting those contests.

At 30-33, the Lakers are 11th in the Western Conference standings, one game from the No. 10 spot — and the last spot in the play-in round. They're also just 2 1/2 games back of sixth place, and the final guaranteed playoff spot.

That's good news, and so is

what's left for the Lakers on the schedule. Only seven of their final 19 games are against teams that currently have records over .500 — with several games against other teams jostling for position in the West postseason chase. The Lakers start a five-game homestand Friday against Minnesota. James leads the Lakers in scoring at 29.5 points per game. He said at the All-Star break earlier this month that the team's closing stretch this season would be some of the most important games he has played — noting he didn't want to miss the postseason for a second consecutive year. The Lakers are 6-10 without him in the lineup this season, and 24-23 in games he

has appeared.

If the timetable does not significantly change, this would be only the third time in James' 20-year career that he misses at least 10 consecutive games. He missed a 20-game stretch late in the 2020-21 season with an ankle sprain, and a 17-game stretch in the 2018-19 season with a groin injury. Those stints both came since he joined the Lakers; he never had that long of an extended absence during his times with Cleveland or Miami.

James has logged nearly 65,000 minutes in regular-season and playoff games since entering the league — almost 20,000 more than any other player in that span. □